(c) and (d) The capacity utilization of coal industry in the country has been 89 per cent for Coal India Ltd. and 84 per cent for Singareni Collieries Co. Ltd. in 1990-91.

Privatisation of coal mines

1657. SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR SAHU:

DR. NARREDDY THULASI REDDY:

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE:

SHRI SURESH KALMADI:

SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM:

SHRI HARVENDRA SINGH HANSPAL:

SARDAR JAGJIT SINGH AURORA:

SHRI RANJIT SINGH:

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the World Bank has been pressuring India to open up the new coal mining areas to the private sector for developmet as reported in the Hindustan Times of 24th November, 1991;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reaction of the Government in this regard;

(d) whether in view of serious resources crunch with Government, there is any plan to privatise the coal sector; and

(e) if so the details thereof including the number and criteria for issuing licences?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI S. B. NAYMAGOUDA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

(d) and (e) It has been suggested that new coal based thermal power plants may be allowed their own captive coal mines. The Government is yet to take a view on this suggestion.

Recognition of Hindi by Foreign Countries

1658. SHRI RATNA BAHADUR RAI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of foreign countries that have recognised that Hindi language; and

(b) whether any country or countries outside India have instituted litterary awards for the promotion of Hindi language; if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) While Hindi is widely used in several foreign countries, we are not aware of any country having recognised Hindi as its official language.

(b) Mauritius has started as literary award in November, 1991 for promotion of Hindi. This award is called "Sahitya Puraskar" and is awarded by the Mahatma Gandhi Institute in Mauritius. Information has been asked for from other Missions and will be submitted to the House in due course.

Indian Prisoners in Iraq

1659. SHRI JAGDISH JANI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of Indians are missing from Kuwait;

(b) whether they have been taken hostage by Iraqi forces when they abandoned Kuwait at the end of Gulf war; and

(c) if so, what steps have been taken to release these Indians from

the prisons of Iraq and the results achieved therefrom?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) to (c) The Government had received reports about Indian nationals missing from Kuwait and reported to be under Iraqi detention. The matter was taken up with the Iraqi authorities on each occasion who have consistently maintained that no Indian nationals were held by Iraq.

Khalistani Propaganda

1660. CHOWDHRY HARI SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news item captioned "Khalistani Campaign gains ground" which appeared in the Times of India, New Delhi edition of the 9th October, 1991;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have recently contacted some foreign countries for combating the disruptive activities; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): Yes, Sir.

(b) Khalistani and pro-extremist organisations based mainly in Western Europe, USA and Canada have been indulging in propaganda activities against the Government of India, through pamphlets, magazines and other material with the aim of moulding public opinion in their favour.

(c) and (d) The Government has been in contact with the concerned countries at appropriate levels and through the media to counter the activities of these organisations abroad. This is a continuing exercise aimed at keeping them informed about the factual position regarding the developments in the Punjab and the activities of the extremist and pro-extremist groups in India and abroad.

India's stand on Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

1661. SHRI G. G. SWELL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the United States of America and the Soviet Union have mutually embarked on a programme of elimination of tactical and short range nuclear warheads on land, sea and air;

(b) whether this will lead to the scrapping and dismantling of Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles as well; and

(c) if so, whether in this context Government propose to review its policy on the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): US and USSR have recently announced their decision to embark on a programme of elimination of most of their land based short range nuclear warheads. They have also decided to withdraw nuclear warheads from ships and certain kinds of submarines.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

India's Diplomatic Relations with Russia

1662. SHRI G. G. SWELL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Russian Federation has approached India for establishing direct diplomatic relations with her;

(b) whether in view of the structural changes in the Soviet Union Government propose to reorganise our mission in Moscow; and